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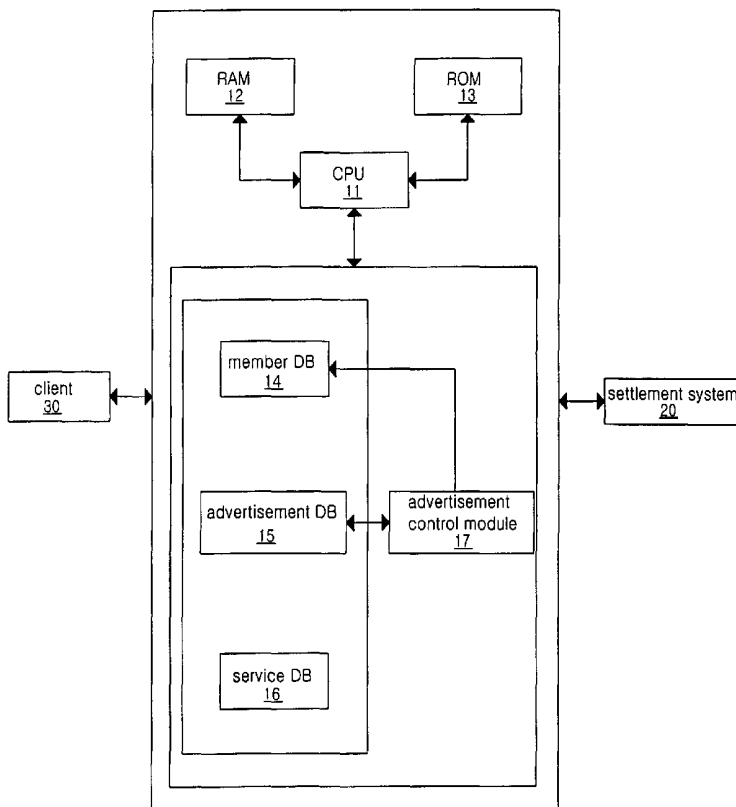
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(54) Title: THE OPTION SYSTEM AND THE OPTION METHOD OF AN INTERNET ADVERTISEMENT SUBSCRIPTION



(57) Abstract: The present invention is related to a system and method for choosing to view Internet advertisements which produce the option of the Internet advertisement subscription for the clients of internet service. Therefore they can reject the internet advertisement subscription when they don't want to subscribe an internet advertisement.



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THE OPTION SYSTEM AND THE OPTION METHOD OF AN INTERNET
ADVERTISEMENT SUBSCRIPTION

Technical Field

5 The present invention relates to an option system and an option method of an
Internet advertisement subscription, in which a main server including a member database
having a paid member database and an unpaid member database for managing member
information, an advertisement database for managing advertisement programs and
transmitting advertisements to clients, a service database for managing services to be
10 provided to the clients and transmitting service and an advertisement control module for
verifying member information and controlling advertisement, and a settlement system for
managing settlement information of members through member information transmitted
from the member database of the main server, verifying the settlement information of
members and transmitting the settlement information of members to the main server are
15 connected to the clients through a network and control advertisement.

Background Art

 With the development of the Internet, economic activities are actively carried out
using the Internet, and the number of Internet service providers has been considerably
increased.

20 An Internet advertising market, which is the main source of revenue of Internet
service providers, has grown rapidly in comparison with the advertising market of
conventional media such as television, newspaper, magazine, etc. In Korean, the Internet
advertising market totaled about 37 billion won in 1999, and is expected to amount to about
70 billion won in 2000.

25 In the Internet advertisement field, with the growth of the advertising market, the
types of advertisements become diversified. Accordingly, the advent of Internet
advertisements of diversified types, such as banner advertisements like box advertisements,
E-mail advertisements, image advertisements and selection advertisements, causes clients a

problem that transmission speed is decreased.

Additionally, there occurs a problem that it is difficult for clients to obtain information from among a number of advertisements.

5 Additionally, there occurs a problem that clients are forced to view advertisements without being able to reject them.

Disclosure of the Invention

Accordingly, the present invention has been made keeping in mind the above problems occurring in the prior art, and an object of the present invention is to provide a system for choosing to view Internet advertisements, in which a right to choose between the viewing and not viewing of advertisements is provided to a certain client, thereby securing
10 the convenience of a user and providing service without advertisements.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a system and method for choosing to view Internet advertisements, in which a right to choose between the viewing and not viewing of advertisements is provided to part of clients, that is, paid or excellent
15 members, thereby helping service providers to increase profits in advertising revenues.

Still another object of the present invention is to provide a system and method for choosing to view Internet advertisements, in which a right to choose between the viewing and not viewing of advertisements can be obtained by the payment of money or cybermoney, thereby providing a right to choose to a user.

20 Still another object of the present invention is to provide a system and method for choosing to view Internet advertisements, which helps service providers to increase profits through money users pay for a right to choose between the viewing and not viewing of advertisements.

In order to accomplish the above object, the present invention provides a system
25 for choosing to view Internet advertisements, comprising: a main server including a member DB comprised of a paid member DB and an unpaid member DB for managing member information, an advertisement DB for managing advertisement programs and transmitting advertisements to clients, a service DB for managing services to be provided to the clients and transmitting service, and an advertisement control module for verifying

member information and controlling advertisement; and a settlement system for managing settlement information of members through member information transmitted from the member DB of the main server, verifying the settlement information of members, and transmitting the settlement information of members to the main server; wherein the main server and the settlement system are connected to the clients though a network and control advertisement.

Preferably, the clients access the main server through an access apparatus using the Internet, a Web Television network, a mobile phone network or a similar network.

In addition, the present invention provides a method of choosing to view Internet advertisements in a system for choosing to review Internet advertisements in which advertisement is controlled using a network connecting a main server, clients and a settlement system, comprising: an accessing step of the client accessing the main server; a transmission step of the main server transmitting service and advertisements to the clients; a logging-in step of each of the clients inputting his information; a verification step of member information being verified in a member DB and a settlement system; a right granting step of the main server granting a right to choose between viewing and not viewing of advertisements through an advertisement control module; an advertisement choosing step of the client choosing between viewing and not viewing of advertisements; and an advertisement control and service provision step of controlling advertisement through the advertisement control module and providing service according to the advertisement control request of the client.

Preferably, the method further comprises a reception step of the settlement system receiving fees for service without advertisements or points corresponding to the fees if a paid or excellent member client requests service without part or all of advertisements, wherein the main server provides service without part or all of advertisements to the client through the advertisement control module.

Preferably, the method further comprises a service utilization step of the client utilizing service without part or all of advertisements; an advertisement re-viewing request step of the client requesting re-viewing of advertisements from the main server; a changed information transmission step of transmitting changed information of the client to the settlement system; a changed information processing step of verifying and processing the

changed information of the client in the settlement system; and a service-with-advertisement provision step of the main server providing service with advertisements.

Preferably, the method further comprises a service utilization step of the client choosing to view advertisements and utilizing service with advertisements; an advertisement deletion request step of the client requesting deletion of advertisements from the main server; a changed information transmission step of transmitting changed information of the client to the settlement system; a changed information processing step of verifying and processing the changed information of the client in the settlement system; and a service-without-advertisement provision step of the main server providing service without advertisements.

Preferably, the member information verification step comprises an information transmission step of a paid member DB of the member DB transmitting information of a paid member to the advertisement control module; and an information exchange step of the advertisement control module verifying the information of the paid member through information exchange with the settlement system and providing processed service information to the settlement system.

In addition, the present invention provides a method of choosing to view Internet advertisements in a system for choosing to view Internet advertisements in which advertisement is controlled using a network connecting a main server, clients and a settlement system, comprising: an accessing step of the client accessing the main server; a transmission step of the main server transmitting service and advertisements to each of the clients; a logging-in step of the client inputting his information; a verification step of member information being verified in a member DB of the main server and the settlement system; and a service-without-advertisements provision step of the main server providing service without part or all of advertisements to paid or excellent members through an advertisement control module.

The preferred construction and various embodiments of the present invention can be clearly understood from the following detailed description.

The above-described system and method for choosing to view Internet advertisements provides a right to choose between the viewing and not viewing of advertisements to clients.

Additionally, the system and method for choosing to view Internet advertisements of the present invention can increase transmission speed by deleting advertisements from service.

5 Additionally, the system and method for choosing to view Internet advertisements of the present invention can provide easy-to-view service to clients by deleting advertisements from service.

10 Additionally, the system and method for choosing to view Internet advertisements of the present invention restricts a right to choose the viewing and not viewing of advertisements to part of clients, thereby allowing service providers to maintain advertising profits.

Additionally, in the system and method for choosing to view Internet advertisements of the present invention, clients can have a right to choose between the viewing and not viewing of advertisements by the payment of money or cybermoney.

15 Additionally, the system and method for choosing to view Internet advertisements of the present invention helps a service provider to obtain profits through money users pay for a right to choose between the viewing and not viewing of advertisements.

Brief Description of the Drawings

20 The above and other objects, features and other advantages of the present invention will be more clearly understood from the following detailed description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 is a schematic diagram of the system for choosing to view Internet advertisements in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a conceptual diagram showing the main server of Fig. 1;

25 Fig. 3 is a flowchart showing the outline of a method of choosing to view Internet advertisements;

Fig. 4 is a flowchart showing a relationship between the right to choose to review Internet advertisements according to an embodiment of the present invention and the settlement system;

Fig. 5 is a flowchart showing the first service conversion of the method of

choosing to view Internet advertisements according to the embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 6 is a flowchart showing the second service conversion of the method of choosing to view Internet advertisements according to the embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 7 is a schematic diagram showing the function of the advertisement control module of Fig. 3;

Fig. 8a is a view showing a log-in screen displayed at the unpaid member service utilization step of the method of choosing to view Internet advertisements in accordance with the embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 8b is a view showing a service screen with advertisements displayed at the unpaid member service utilization step of the method of choosing to view Internet advertisements in accordance with the embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 9a is a view showing a log-in screen displayed at the paid member service utilization step of the method of choosing to view Internet advertisements in accordance with the embodiment of the present invention;

Figs. 9b and 9c are views showing service choice screens displayed at the paid member service utilization step of the method of choosing to view Internet advertisements in accordance with the embodiment of the present invention;

Figs. 9d and 9e are views showing service screens displayed at the paid member service utilization step of the method of choosing to view Internet advertisements in accordance with the embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 10 is a flowchart showing the outline of a method of choosing to view Internet advertisements in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention; and

Fig. 11 is a schematic diagram showing the function of the advertisement control module of Fig. 10.

Best Mode for Carrying Out the Invention

1. System for choosing to view Internet advertisements

Hereinafter, with reference to the accompanying drawings, a system for choosing

to view Internet advertisements in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention is described in detail.

Fig. 1 is a schematic diagram of the system for choosing to view Internet advertisements. Fig. 2 is a conceptual diagram showing the main server of Fig. 1.

5 Referring to Fig. 1, the system for choosing to view Internet advertisements has a construction in which a settlement system 20 and a client 30 are connected to each other through a computer network or the like around a main server 10.

10 Referring to Fig. 2, the main server 10 is connected to the settlement system 20 and the client 30. The main server 10 comprises a basic system including a Central Processing Unit (CPU) 11, a Random Access Memory (RAM) 12 and a Read Only Memory (ROM) 12, a member DataBase (DB) 14, an advertisement DB 15, a service DB 16, and an advertisement control module 17.

DBs that should be provided in the main server 10 are as follows:

1. the member DB 14 for managing member information,
- 15 2. the advertisement DB 15 for managing advertisements to be provided to the client 30, and
3. the service DB 16 for managing services to be provided to the client 30.

20 The advertisement control module 17 functions to control advertisement by controlling conjunction with the advertisement DB 15 through the member information of the client 30.

Referring again to Fig. 1, the settlement system 20 manages the settlement information of members through member information transmitted from the member DB 14 of the main server 10, verifies the settlement information of members, and transmits the settlement information of members to the main server 10.

25 Referring to Fig. 1, the system for choosing to view Internet advertisements is generally described. The client 30 accesses the main server 10 (1), and the main server 10 provides service and advertisements to the client 30 (2). When the client 30 logs in (3), the main server 10 transmits the member information of the client 30 to the settlement system 20 (4). The settlement system 20 verifies the member information received from
30 the main server 10, and provides the settlement information of the client 30 to the main server 10 (5). The main server 10 having verified the settlement information of the client

30 grants a right to choose to view Internet advertisements to the client 30 (6). If the client 30 requests the deletion of advertisements from the main server 10 (7), the main server 10 provides service without part or all of advertisements.

2. Method of choosing to view Internet advertisements

5 Hereinafter, with reference to the accompanying drawings, the method of choosing to review Internet advertisements in accordance with preferred embodiments of the present inventions is described in detail.

Embodiment 1

10 Fig. 3 is a flowchart showing the outline of a method of choosing to view Internet advertisements.

Referring to Fig. 3, when the client 30 accesses the main server 10 (S206), the main server 10 transmits service and advertisements (S204). If the client 30 logs in (S206), the member information of the client 30 is verified through the main server 10 and the settlement system 20 (S208). If the client 30 is an unpaid member, service with advertisements is provided (S210); while if the client 30 is a paid or excellent member, a right to choose between the viewing and not viewing of advertisements is granted to the client (S212). If the client 30 wants to delete part or all of advertisements (S214), service without part or all of advertisements is provided to the client 30 (S216); while if the client 30 does not want the deletion of advertisements, service with advertisements is provided (S210).

20 Fig. 4 is a flowchart showing a relationship between the right to choose to view Internet advertisements according to an embodiment of the present invention and the settlement system.

A client 30, who is a paid or excellent member, logs in, and is granted a right to choose between the viewing and not viewing of Internet advertisements through the verification of his member information (S402). If the client 30 does not want service without all or part of advertisements (S404), the main server 10 provides service with advertisements while the settlement status of the client 30 is not varied in the settlement system 20 (S406) (S408). If the client 30 wants the deletion of part or all of

advertisements (S404), the settlement system 20 receives fees for the service the client 30 requested or points corresponding to the value of the fees (S410), and provides service without part or all of advertisements.

5 Fig. 5 is a flowchart showing the first service conversion of the method of choosing to view Internet advertisements according to the embodiment of the present invention.

If client 30 utilizes service without part or all of advertisements (S602) and does not want current service to be converted into service with advertisements for a certain reason (S604), the state of settlement is not changed in the settlement system 20 (S606).
10 If the client 30 wants current service to be converted to service with advertisements (S604), the main server 10 transmits the information of the client 30 to convert service to the settlement system 20 (S608). After the settlement system 20 processes settlement matters regarding the conversion of service (S610), the main server 10 provides service with advertisements to the client 30 (S612).

15 Fig. 6 is a flowchart showing the second service conversion of the method of choosing to view Internet advertisements according to the embodiment of the present invention.

If client 30 utilizes service with advertisements (S802) and does not want current service to be converted into service without part or all of advertisements for a certain reason
20 (S804), the state of settlement is not changed in the settlement system 20 (S806). If the client 30 wants current service to be converted to service without part or all of advertisements (S804), the main server 10 transmits the information of the client 30 to convert service to the settlement system 20 (S808). After the settlement system 20 processes settlement matters regarding the conversion of service (S810), the main server 10
25 provides service without part or all of advertisements to the client 30 (S812).

Fig. 7 is a schematic diagram showing the function of the advertisement control module of Fig. 3.

If the client 30 logs in (1), the member DB 14 transmits member information to the service DB 16 (3). The service DB 16 provides service to the client 30 regardless of
30 membership (3). The member DB 14 includes an unpaid member DB 14-1 and a paid member DB 14-2. If the client is an unpaid member, the member DB 14 transmits

member information to the advertisement DB 15 (5) and allows the advertisement DB 15 to transmit advertisements to the client 30 (6).

If the client 30 is a paid member, a right to choose between the viewing and not viewing of advertisements is granted to the client 30 through the advertisement control module 17. Two types of processes exist according to the position of the advertisement control module 17.

In the first type, the paid member DB 14b provides paid member information to the advertisement control module 17X, and advertisements are transmitted only to a client 30 wanting to view advertisements through conjunction with the advertisement DB 15 (5X-1). On the other hand, service without part or all of advertisements is provided to a client 30 not wanting to view part or all of advertisements through conjunction with the advertisement DB 15. The advertisement module 17X exchanges the service utilization information and settlement information of the client 30 with the settlement system 20 (5X-2).

In the second type, the paid membership DB 14b provides paid membership information to the advertisement control module 17Y (5Y). The membership DB 14 provides membership information to the advertisement DB 15 (5Y-1), and the advertisement DB 15 transmits advertisements to the advertisement control module 17Y (6). The advertisement control module 17Y transmits advertisements only to a client 30 wanting to view advertisements, on the basis of paid membership information received from the paid membership DB 14-2 (7Y). The advertisement control module 17Y provides service without part or all of advertisements to a client 30 not wanting to view part or all of advertisements through its own control. The advertisement control module 17Y exchanges the service utilization information and settlement information of the client 30 with the settlement system 20 (5Y-2).

Fig. 8a is a view showing a log-in screen displayed at the unpaid member service utilization step of the method of choosing to view Internet advertisements in accordance with the embodiment of the present invention, and Fig. 8b is a view showing a service screen with advertisements displayed at the unpaid member service utilization step of the method of choosing to view Internet advertisements in accordance with the embodiment of the present invention.

Referring to Figs. 8a and 8b, if an unpaid member logs in, service with advertisements is provided without the provision of a right to choose between the viewing and not viewing of advertisements.

5 Fig. 9a is a view showing a log-in screen displayed at the paid member service utilization step of the method of choosing to view Internet advertisements in accordance with the embodiment of the present invention, Figs. 9b and 9c are views showing service choice screens displayed at the paid member service utilization step of the method of choosing to view Internet advertisements in accordance with the embodiment of the present invention, and Figs. 9d and 9e are views showing service screens displayed at the paid
10 member service utilization step of the method of choosing to view Internet advertisements in accordance with the embodiment of the present invention.

If a paid member logs in as shown in Fig. 9a, service choice screens are displayed as shown in Figs. 9b and 9c. If the viewing of advertisements is chosen as shown in Fig. 9b, service with advertisements is provided as shown in Fig. 9d. On the other hand, if the
15 not viewing of advertisements is chosen as shown in Fig. 9c, service without advertisements is provided.

Embodiment 2

In this embodiment 2, if a paid member is verified through the main server and the settlement system, service without advertisements is provided without the provision of a
20 right to choose between the viewing and not viewing of advertisements, differently from the embodiment 1.

Fig. 10 is a flowchart showing the outline of a method of choosing to view Internet advertisements in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention.

If the client 30 accesses the main server 10 (S1002), the main server 10 transmits service and advertisements (S1004). If the client 30 logs in (S1006), the member
25 information of the client 30 is verified through the main server 10 and the settlement system 20. If the client 30 is an unpaid member (S1008), service with advertisements is provided (S1010); while if the client 30 is a paid or excellent member (S1008), service without part or all of advertisements is provided to the client 30 through the advertisement control
30 module 17 of the main server 10 (S1012).

Fig. 11 is a schematic diagram showing the function of the advertisement control module of Fig. 10.

If the client 30 logs in (1), the member DB 14 transmits member information to the service DB 16 (3). The service DB 16 provides service to the client 30 regardless of membership (3). The member DB 14 includes an unpaid member DB 14-1 and a paid member DB 14-2. If the client is an unpaid member, the member DB 14 transmits member information to the advertisement DB 15 (5) and allows the advertisement DB 15 to transmit advertisements to the client 30 (6).

If the client 30 is a paid member, service without part or all of advertisements is provided through the advertisement control module 17. Two types of processes exist according to the position of the advertisement control module 17.

In the first type, the member DB 14 provides member information to the advertisement control module 17X, the paid member DB 14-2 provides paid member information to the advertisement control module 17X (5X-1), and advertisements are transmitted only to a client 30, who is an unpaid member, through conjunction with the advertisement DB 15 (5X-3). On the other hand, service without part or all of advertisements is provided to a client 30, who is a paid member, through conjunction with the advertisement DB 15. The advertisement module 17X exchanges the service utilization information and settlement information of the client 30 with the settlement system 20 (5X-2).

In the second type, the member DB 14 provides member information to the advertisement DB 17Y (5Y) and the paid membership DB 14b provides paid membership information to the advertisement control module 17Y (5Y-1). The advertisement DB 15 transmits advertisements to the advertisement control module 17Y (6). The advertisement control module 17Y provides service without part or all of advertisements only to a client 30 who is a paid member, on the basis of paid membership information received from the paid membership DB 14-2 (7Y). The advertisement control module 17Y provides service without part or all of advertisements to a client 30 who is a paid member, through its own control. The advertisement control module 17Y transmits advertisements only to an unpaid member 30 (7Y). The advertisement control module 17Y exchanges the service utilization information and settlement information of the client 30 with the settlement

system 20 (5Y-2).

Although the system and method for choosing to view Internet advertisements has been described with reference to the preferred embodiments, those skilled in the art will appreciate that various modifications, additions and substitutions are possible, without
5 departing from the scope and spirit of the invention as disclosed in the accompanying claims.

Claims

1. A system for choosing to view Internet advertisements, comprising:

a main server including a member Database (DB) comprised of a paid member DB and an unpaid member DB for managing member information, an advertisement DB for managing advertisement programs and transmitting advertisements to clients, a service DB for managing services to be provided to the clients and transmitting service, and an advertisement control module for verifying member information and controlling advertisement; and

a settlement system for managing settlement information of members through member information transmitted from the member DB of the main server, verifying the settlement information of members, and transmitting the settlement information of members to the main server;

wherein the main server and the settlement system are connected to the clients through a network and control advertisement.

2. The system according to claim 1, wherein said clients access the main server through an access apparatus using the Internet, a Web Television network, a mobile phone network or a similar network.

3. A method of choosing to view Internet advertisements in a system for choosing to review Internet advertisements in which advertisement is controlled using a network connecting a main server, clients and a settlement system, comprising:

an accessing step of the client accessing the main server;

a transmission step of the main server transmitting service and advertisements to the clients;

a logging-in step of each of the clients inputting his information;

a verification step of member information being verified in a member DB and a settlement system;

a right granting step of the main server granting a right to choose between viewing and not viewing of advertisements through an advertisement control module;

an advertisement choosing step of the client choosing between viewing and not viewing of advertisements; and

an advertisement control and service provision step of controlling advertisement through the advertisement control module and providing service according to the advertisement control request of the client.

4. The method according to claim 3, wherein said clients access the main server through an access apparatus using the Internet, a Web Television network, a mobile phone network or a similar network.

5. The method according to claim 3, further comprising a reception step of said settlement system receiving fees for service without advertisements or points corresponding to the fees if a paid or excellent member client requests service without part or all of advertisements, wherein said main server provides service without part or all of advertisements to the client through the advertisement control module.

6. The method according to claim 5, further comprising:

a service utilization step of the client utilizing service without part or all of advertisements;

an advertisement re-viewing request step of the client requesting re-viewing of advertisements from the main server;

a changed information transmission step of transmitting changed information of the client to the settlement system;

a changed information processing step of verifying and processing the changed information of the client in the settlement system; and

a service-with-advertisement provision step of the main server providing service with advertisements.

7. The method according to claim 3, further comprising:

a service utilization step of the client choosing to view advertisements and utilizing service with advertisements;

an advertisement deletion request step of the client requesting deletion of advertisements from the main server;

a changed information transmission step of transmitting changed information of the client to the settlement system;

5 a changed information processing step of verifying and processing the changed information of the client in the settlement system; and

a service-without-advertisement provision step of the main server providing service without advertisements.

10 8. The method according to claim 3, wherein said member information verification step comprises:

an information transmission step of a paid member DB of the member DB transmitting information of a paid member to the advertisement control module; and

15 an information exchange step of the advertisement control module verifying the information of the paid member through information exchange with the settlement system and providing processed service information to the settlement system.

9. A method of choosing to view Internet advertisements in a system for choosing to view Internet advertisements in which advertisement is controlled using a network connecting a main server, clients and a settlement system, comprising:

an accessing step of the client accessing the main server;

20 a transmission step of the main server transmitting service and advertisements to each of the clients;

a logging-in step of the client inputting his information;

a verification step of member information being verified in a member DB of the main server and the settlement system; and

25 a service-without-advertisements provision step of the main server providing service without part or all of advertisements to paid or excellent members through an advertisement control module.

10. The method according to claim 9, wherein said clients access the main server

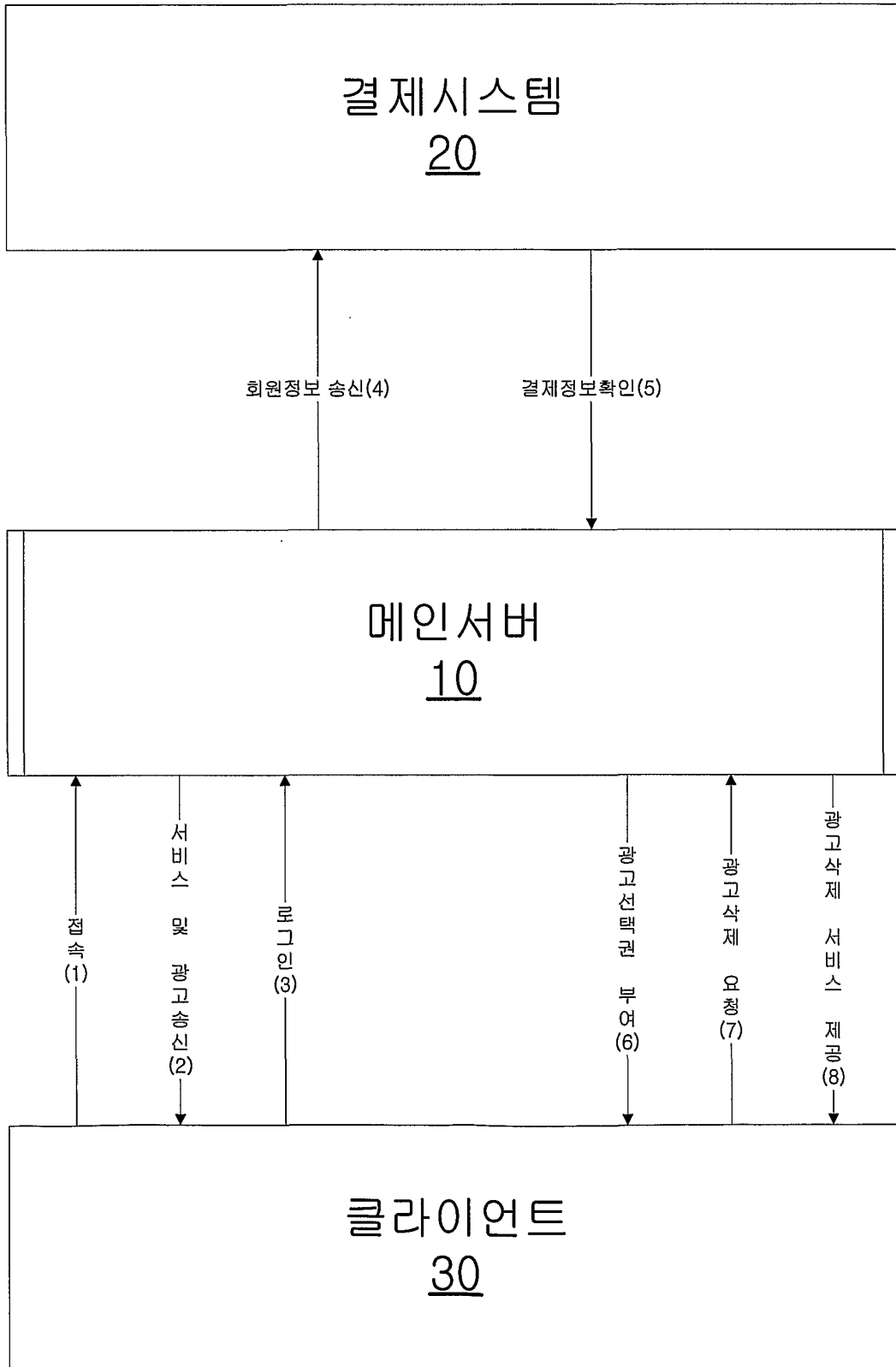
through an access apparatus using the Internet, a Web Television network, a mobile phone network or a similar network.

11. The method according to claim 9, wherein said member information verification step comprises:

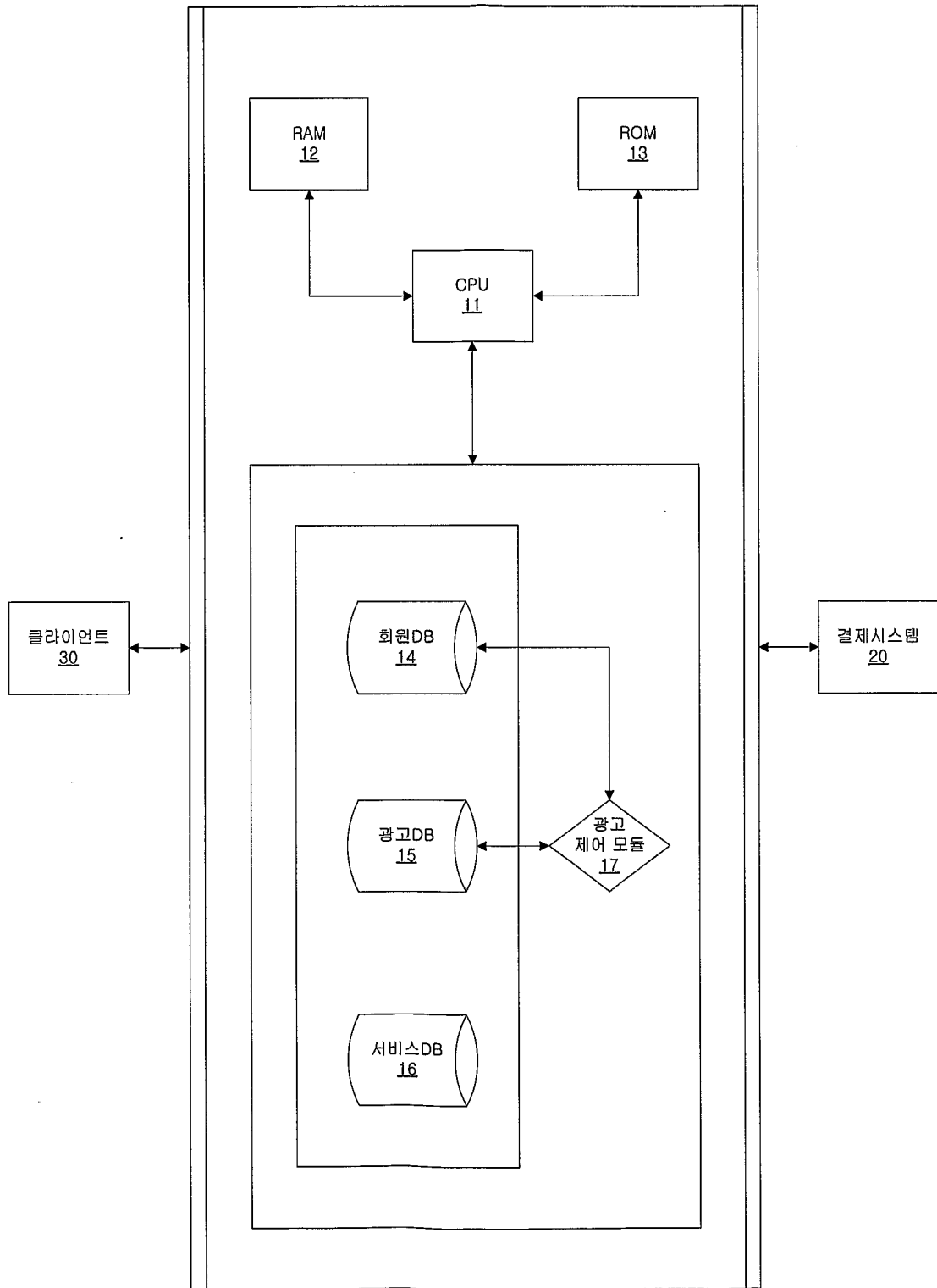
5 an information transmission step of a paid member DB of the member DB transmitting information of a paid member to the advertisement control module; and

 an information exchange step of the advertisement control module verifying the information of the paid member through information exchange with the settlement system and providing processed service information to the settlement system.

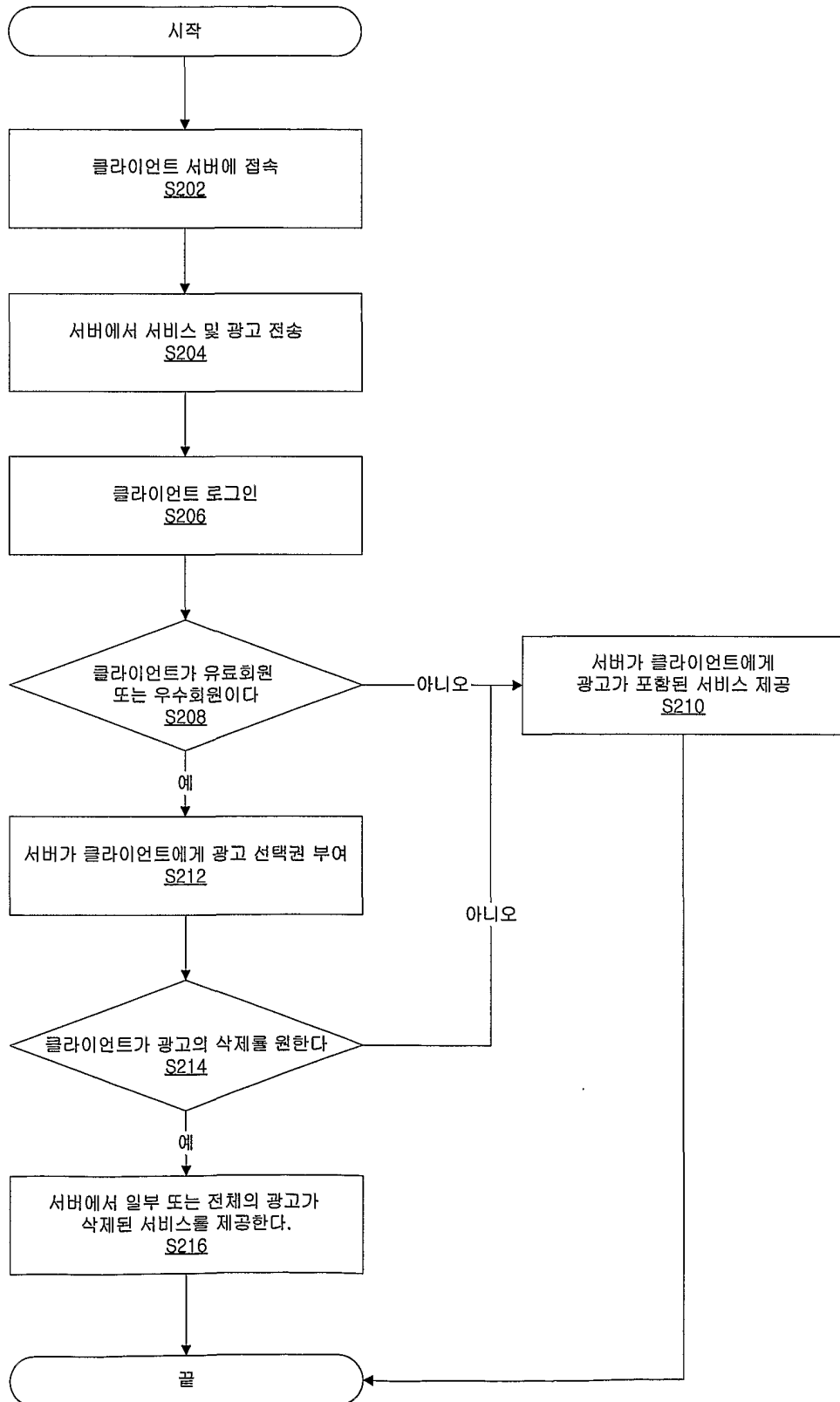
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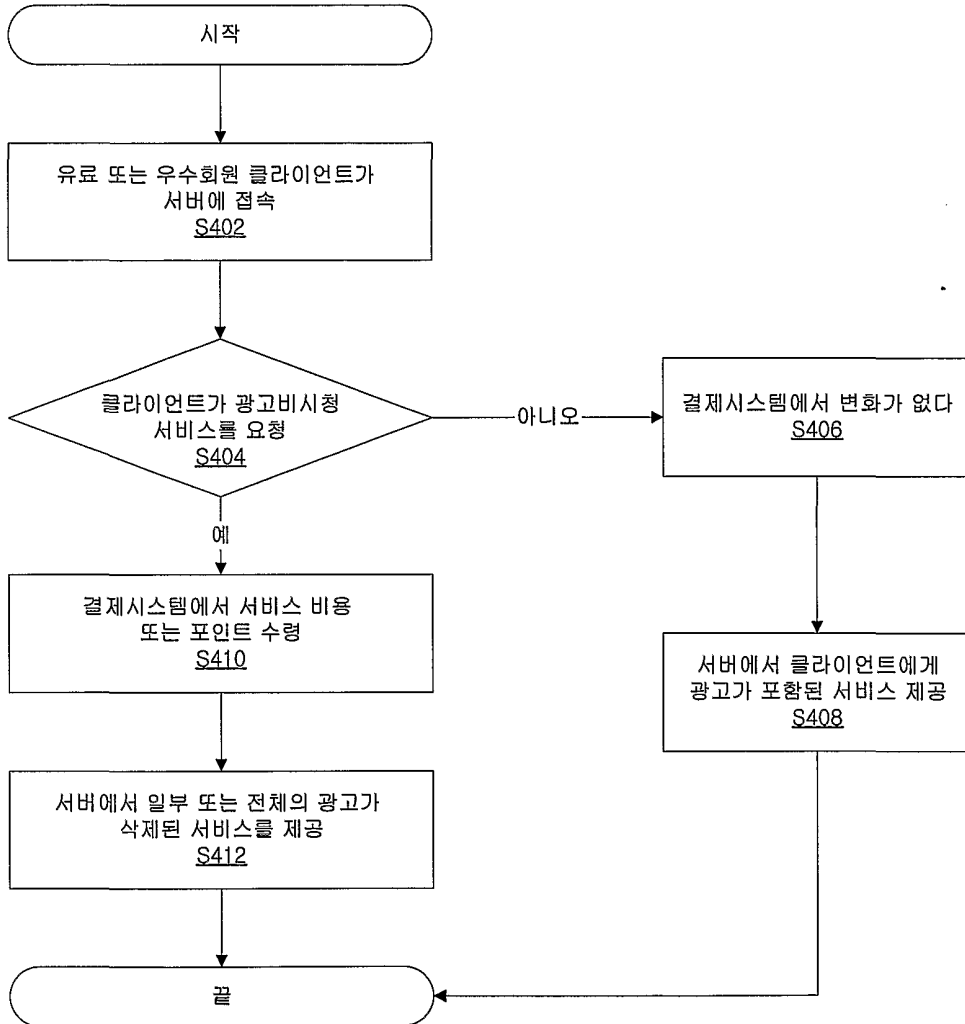
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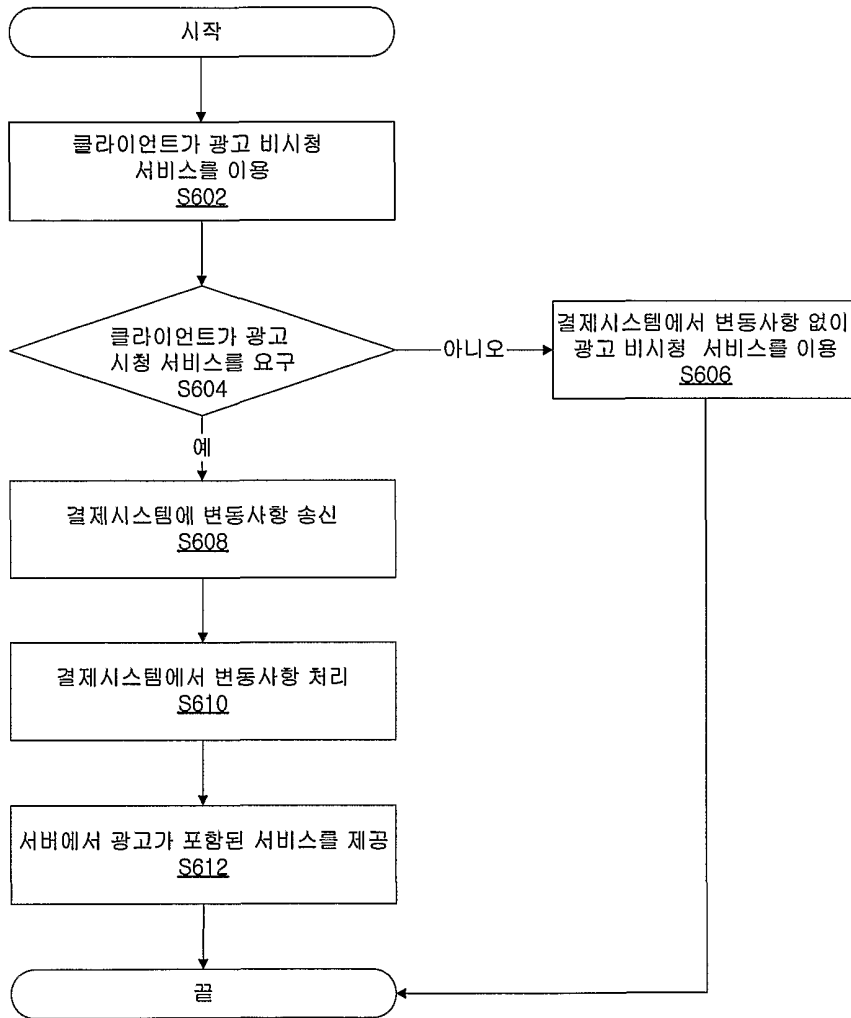
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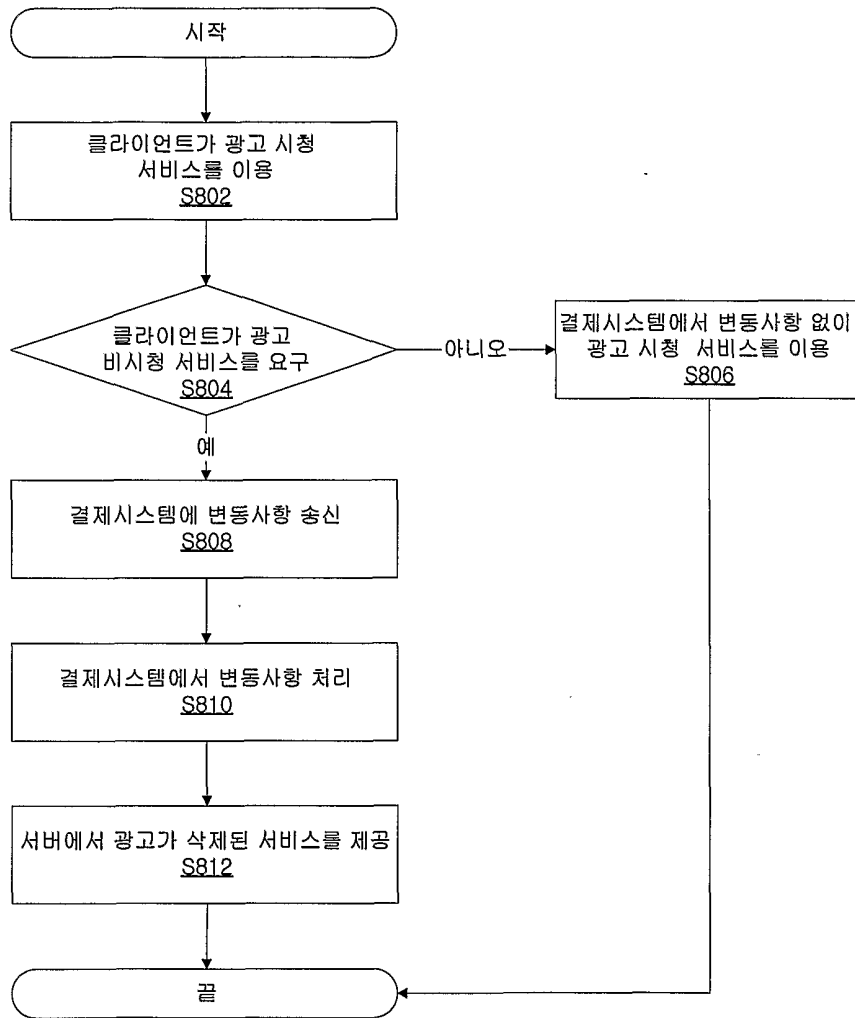
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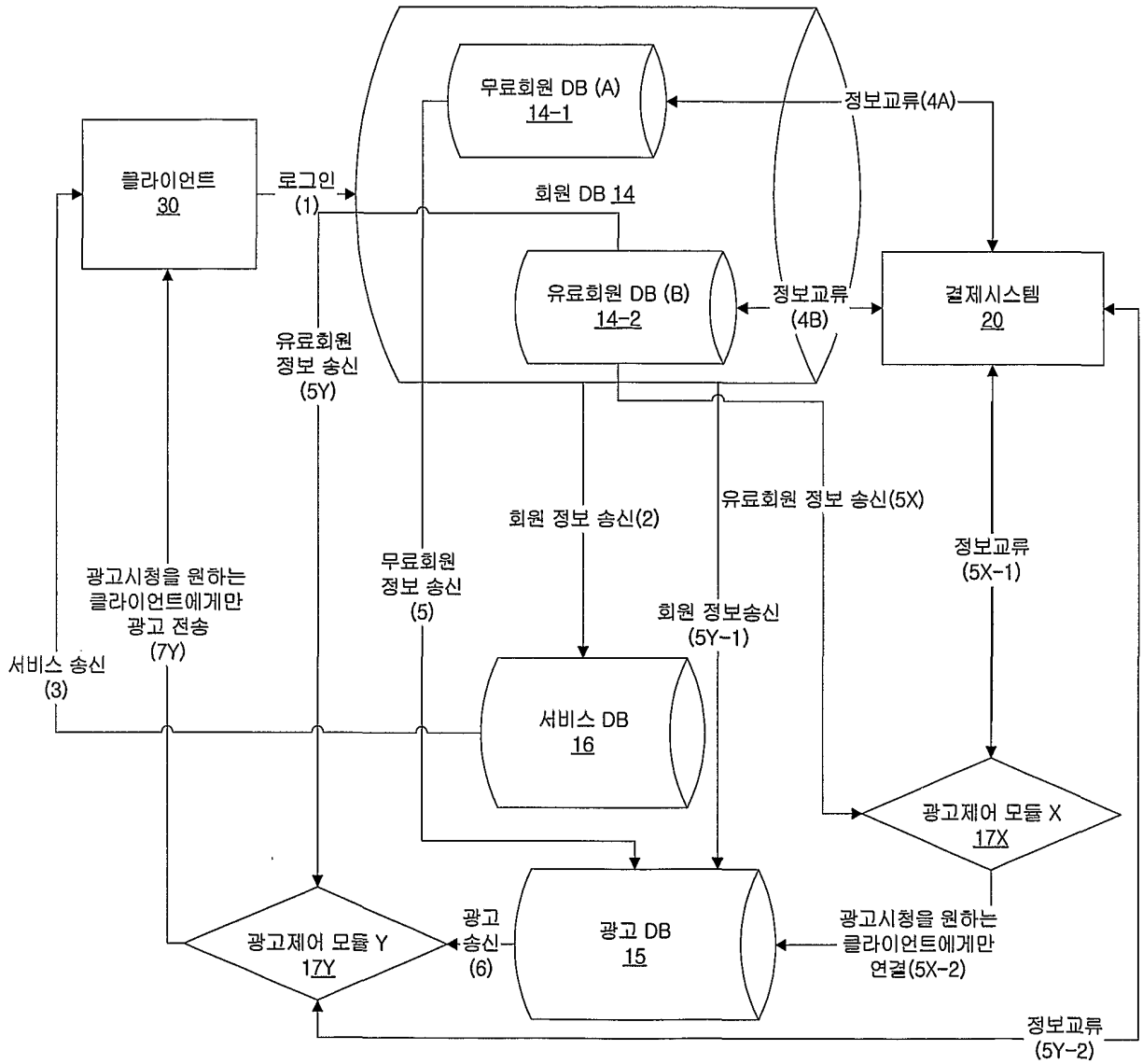
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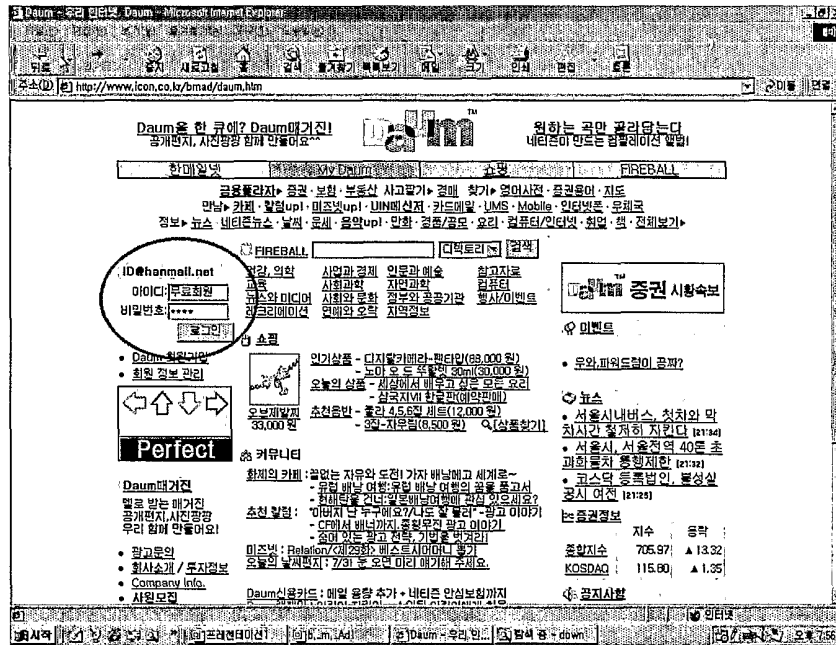
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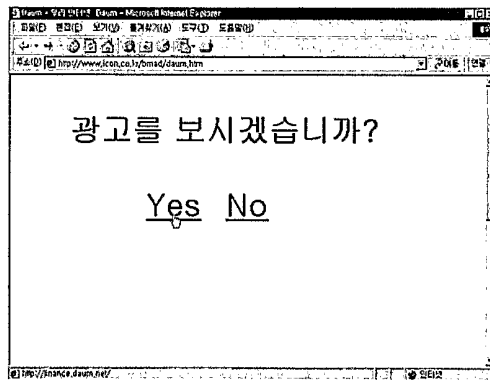


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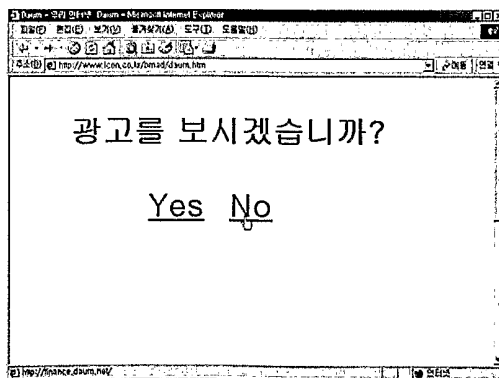
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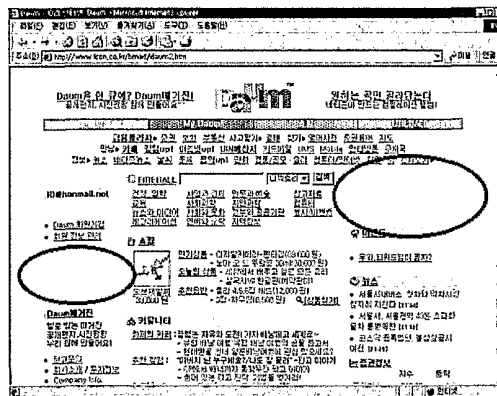
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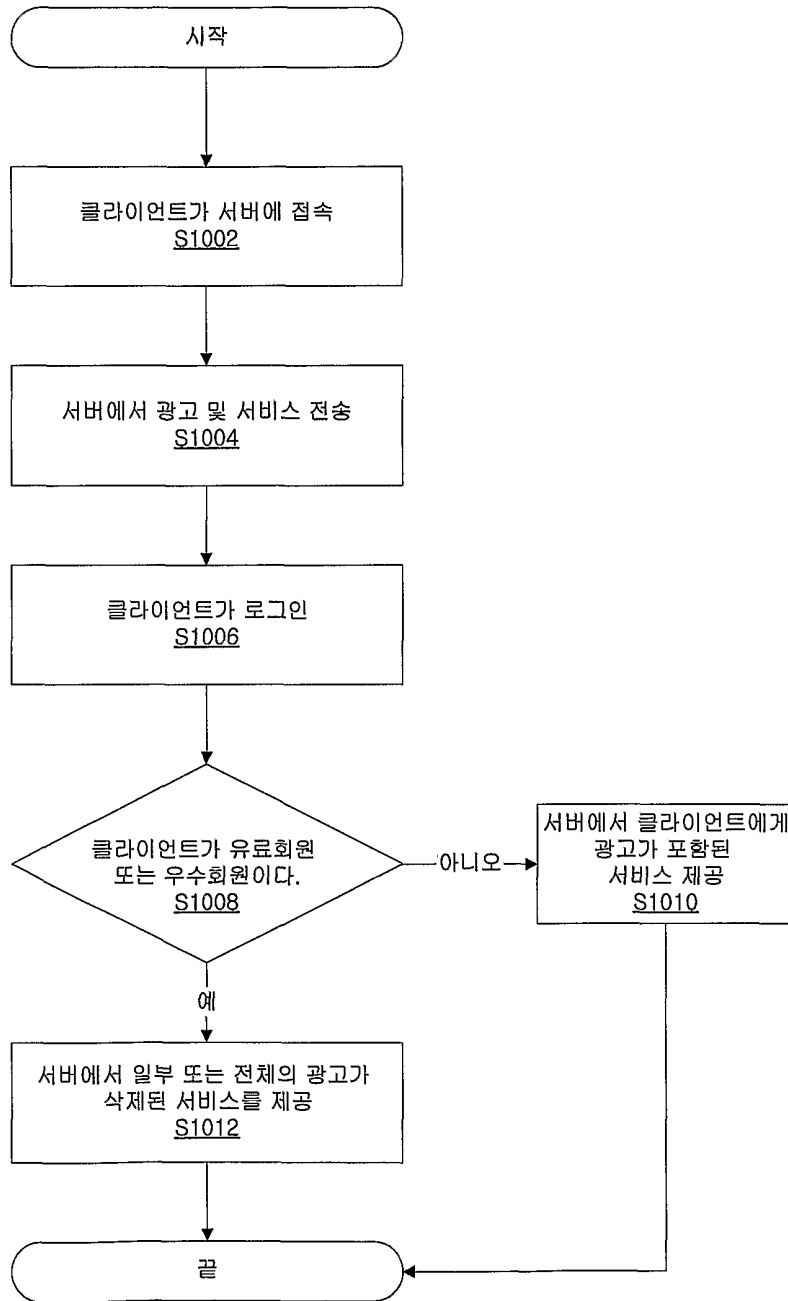
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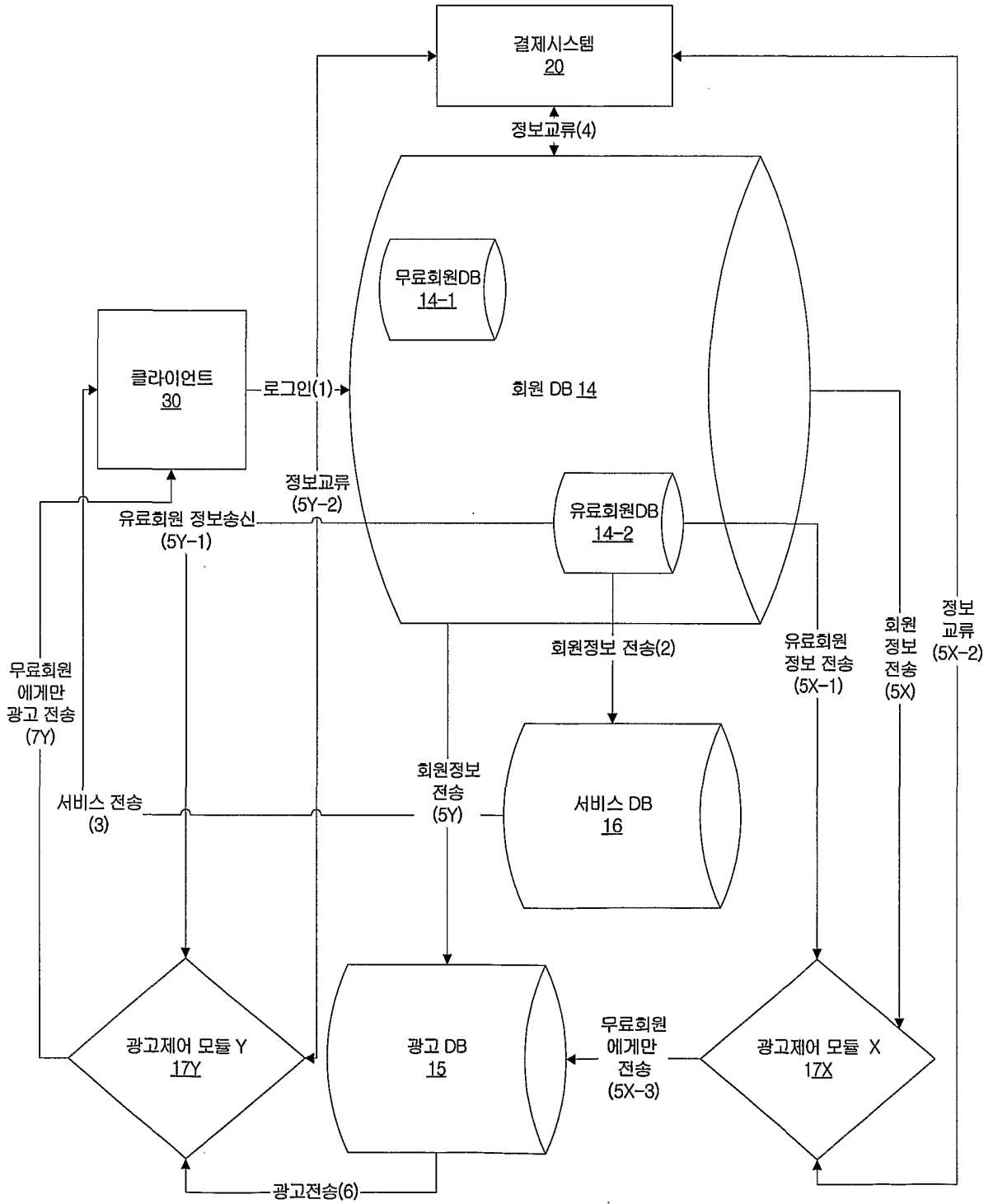
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도 11



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/KR01/00781

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC7 G06F 17/00

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC7 G06F 17/00, 19/00

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	US6047310 A (FUJITSU LIMITED) APR. 04. 2000 see the whole document	1-11
A	US6023270 A (IBM CORP.) FEB 08. 2000 see the whole document	1-11
A	US6014634 A (SUPERMAREKTS ONLINE. INC.) JAN. 11. 2000 see the whole document	1-11
A	US6026368 A (24/7 MEDIA INC.) FEB. 15. 2000 see the whole document	1-11

Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

"E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date

"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of citation or other special reason (as specified)

"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

27 AUGUST 2001 (27.08.2001)

Date of mailing of the international search report

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Name and mailing address of the ISA/KR

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